

im

not

your

little

girl

im

a

WATCH!

*"WE KNOW  
ALL KIND OF  
THIS KIND OF  
OVER INVESTMENT  
IS  
FOR CHILDREN"*

"The ideal mother has no interests of her own... For all of us it remains self-evident that the interests of mother and child are identical, and it is the generally acknowledged measure of the goodness or badness of the mother how far she really feels this identity of interests." - Alice Balint

*■ Nancy Chodorow*



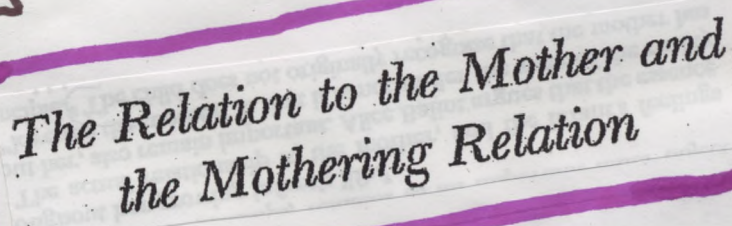


# Buffy

THE VAMPIRE SLAYER

Episode: Gingerbread

and its portrayal of:



The Relation to the Mother and  
the Mothering Relation

# THE GIRLS



BUFFY



vampire  
slayer



chosen  
one



BFFs with  
Willow



\* vampire  
slaying  
stake



witchcraft  
symbol of  
protection

WILLOW



a witch



finding  
herself



BFFs with  
Buffy



\* hmmm... phallic imagery?



# THE MOMS



JOYCE

★ Buffy's mom

★ Founder of

MOO

(mothers  
opposed to  
the occult)

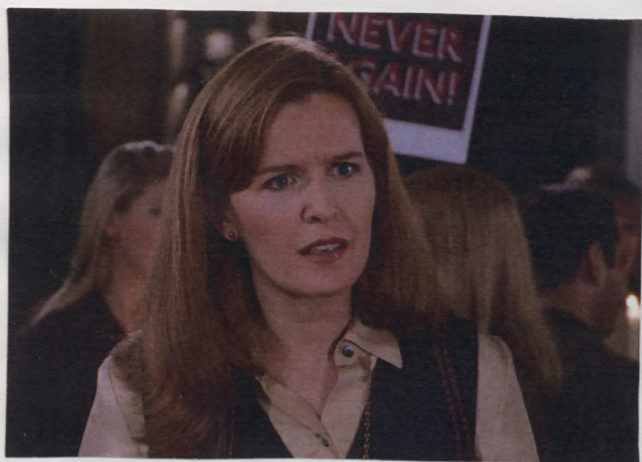
"caught between  
engaging in 'maternal overprotection'  
... and engaging in 'maternal deprivation'!"  
(Chodorow, 84).

SHEILA

★ Willow's mom

★ Member of

MOO



# One Evening, Joyce Joins Buffy on Patrol

Stake  
in hand  
... DUH  
→



BUFFY

The slaying is kind of an  
alone thing...

JOYCE

But it's such a big part of  
your life and I'd like to  
understand it. It's something  
we could share.

Joyce's attachment to Buffy's  
interests speaks to how "the  
mother looks upon her child  
as a part of herself whose  
interests are identical with her own."

(Chodorow, 85)



ISN'T JOYCE JUST

but a child "develops

TRYING TO PROVIDE

a self only by

"GOOD AND DESIRABLE

convincing itself

MATERNAL CARE" (82)

that it is in fact

THROUGH EMPATHIZING

a separate being

WITH HER CHILD?

From her <sup>the</sup> [mother]". (78)

Joyce spots  
something in the words...

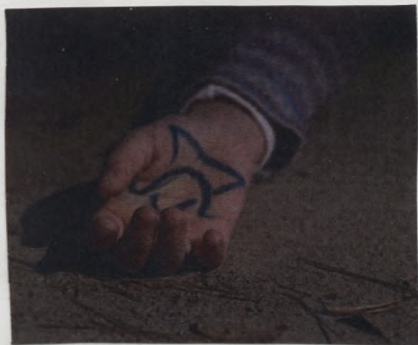


We interrupt  
our  
fine  
for a  
brief  
news  
story...



## Two Children Found Dead

Joyce and Buffy Summers came across two murdered children while taking a walk in the woods last night. The children both had a mysterious marking on their hands. A vigil will be held for them tomorrow, in Sunnydale.



Anybody who  
could do this  
has to be a  
monster!

- Joyce

Uh oh, isn't  
this Willow's  
witchcraft  
symbol?





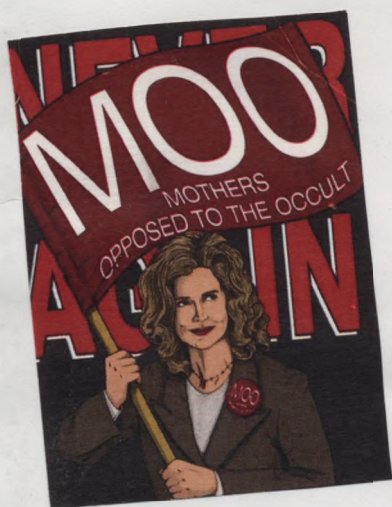
# VIGIL



Sheila

People calling themselves  
witches are responsible for  
this brutal crime.

The  
paranoia  
begins



Joyce

This isn't our town anymore.  
It belongs to the monsters,  
and the witches, and the  
slayers. I say it's time for  
the grown-ups to take  
Sunnydale back.

Joyce becomes  
a community leader

"a mother also participates... in the  
rest of the community and society.  
She experiences herself as a socialized  
adult member of this society" (86).

Joyce's interest in this situation  
goes above and beyond her  
relationship to Buffy, her daughter  
(and the slayer) or Willow who is a witch.

# In This Scene: A Daughter Will Begin to Reject Her Mother

Sheila

Identification with mythical icons is perfectly typical of your age group.

Willow

I'm not an age group, I'm me. Mom, this may be hard for you to accept, but I can do stuff. Nothing bad or dangerous but I can do spells!

Sheila

That's what concerns me, the delusions...



Willow

Mom you're not paying attention!

Sheila

... and this is the way you're trying to get it. You're grounded.

Willow

NO! Hear this! I'm a rebel. I'm having a rebellion.

Sheila

Willow, honey, you don't need to act out like this to prove your specialness.



Maternal Separation-Ometer



"A mother may...not be

control" (has)

total give up this

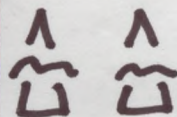
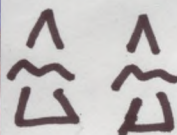
able to



MOM, I'M NOT  
ACTING OUT,  
I'M A  
WITCH!



- Willow



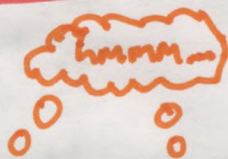
Willow's energy "splits off experientially from its central self, drawing to an internal object energy" (79) when she rejects her mother as her "self" and instead turns to witchcraft as a form of rebellion and individuality.



# MOTHERS!

Chodorow says:

"The mother must know when and how to begin to allow the child to differentiate from her... she must guide her child's separation from her."  
(83)



Would you consider allowing your daughters to continue pursuing slaying and witchcraft, (even if those are not your interests) in order to be better mothers?



of household, also contributes to the life of families.<sup>8</sup> It has facilitated society. The family such as nuclearization and the core of the belief that the polity, or the social must know the children. te from psychoanalytic account's false univer be taken pe of exclusive care mothers in this hus, she usivity, natural and inevitable. The she often care as well as the gender and num tionally h psychoanalysts do not often not to a preoccupati mothering that are post one psycholog ick, or chest, in a loose slii and primary ide irectly against her body, or the with these eve

tion, part of infantile attachment to mother. The real subject is preoccupied with this need for love, the infant's definition of self and its affective relationship with mother. The growing child's psychic life thus comes to consist of unconscious, quasi-ambivalent, helpless-dependent) relationship with mother.

on with issues of primary intimacy and merging. On a level, all people who have experienced primary love identification have some aspect of self that wants to re-experience, and most people try to do so. Freud talks of religion as an attempt to recreate the lost feeling of primary intimacy and merging, and the same is true of Balint suggests that adult love relationships are an attempt to recreate primary intimacy and merging, and the same is true of





Buffy  
Mom you don't want this.

Joyce

Since when does it matter what I want? I wanted a normal happy daughter, instead I got a slayer.

Joyce and

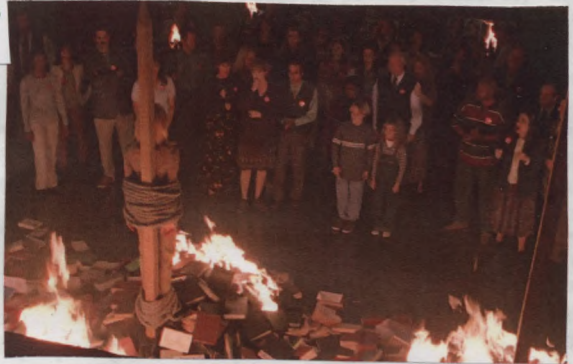
Sheila's organization<sup>MOO</sup> has

Buffy

You're not going to be able to live with yourself

turned the whole town

against Buffy and Willow for being involved with the supernatural through a full-blown:



WITCH  
HUNT

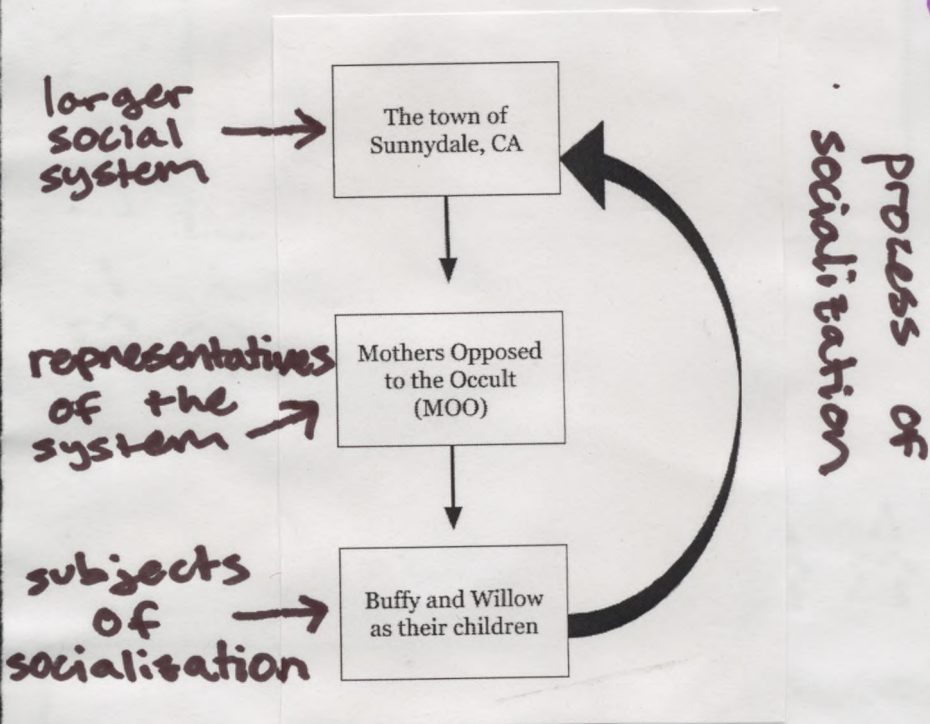


Joyce

You toyed with unnatural forces. What kind of mother would I be if I didn't punish you?



"The mother represents a 'superordinate' social system as well as participating in the mother-child social system. As a representative of this larger system... she socializes the child into it." (86)



Because the girls are going against societal norms through their interests, the moms feel it is their responsibility for the town's sake to exercise control over the girls and "socialize" them.

After the gang saves the day through spells, a fire hose, and the biggest plot twist:



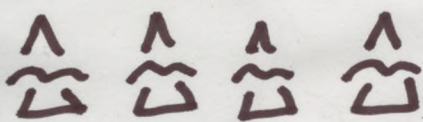
Buffy

Your mother wouldn't mind us doing this?

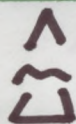
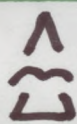


Willow

She doesn't know.



Willow continues to practice witchcraft and Buffy continues to slay vampires.





"Turning from the mother represents independence and individuation, progress, activity, and participation in the real world: 'it is by turning away from our mother that we finally become, by our different paths, grown men and women" (82).

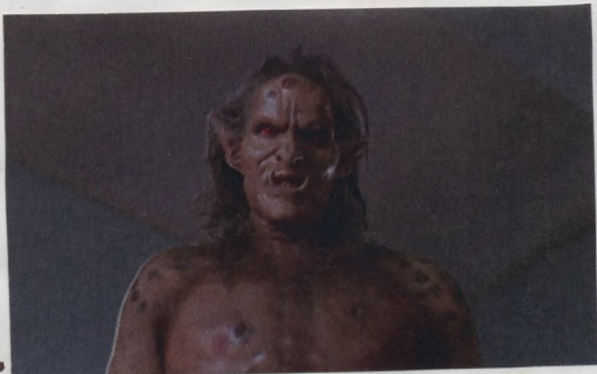
The girls rose above maternal "superordinance" by refusing to be "socialized" by the moms, through cultivating their own "identity of interests", and by rejecting "total control".

The moms grappled with the balance of "maternal overprotection" and "maternal deprivation", but because they are members of "the community and society" they struggled to "give up this total control" of the girls and "guide the child's separation" despite the fact that "this kind of overinvestment is bad for children".

P.S.

Willow and other witches didn't murder those kids, they were actually a demon in disguise whose purpose is to send towns into chaos and panic. The use of Willow's witchcraft symbol was to ensure Sunnydale would turn against her and her supernatural friends. The demon in its true form looks like this:

So that makes it pretty clear who the real monster on Sunnydale was.



The

End

By: Ani Bryce





